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A Ray of Hope for Muslims

When India was set free on August 15, 1947, the whole country was caught in the grip of a severe anti-Muslim wave. The extreme step of assassinating Mahatma Gandhi was meant, inter-alia, to leave the Muslims "defenseless," but, unwittingly, had "the opposite effect by showing the country how dangerous and undisciplined extreme anti-Muslims could be." (Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 504-505).

'The demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya on December 6 is on an exact parallel with Nathu Ram Godsay's murderous attack on the Father of the Nation in that it has elicited the condemnation of extremism, not just by the Muslim fraternity but by serious-minded Hindus all over the country.

This more recent anti-Muslim movement was first launched by extremists in 1986, from which point it went on escalating in an atmosphere which became more and more emotionally charged.

Rabble-rousing, which had been the order of the day, reached its climax on December 6, 1992 when over one lakh Hindu extremists, spurred on by the leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, entered Ayodhya, where they stormed the 465-year-old Babri Masjid, razing it to the ground in a matter of hours.

This is undeniably one of the blackest moments in modern Indian history. A place of worship ought to inspire the greatest respect in society and should be the very last object which anyone would ever think of desecrating. Destroying such a place of worship which is worthy of the utmost reverence is like negating a whole scale of human values.

No right-thinking member of society could do other than brand this incident as the blackest and most deplorable of steps taken by any identifiable group in the country. Its aftermath has been so tragic that ordinary expressions of condemnation will not suffice. But, like other such incidents, this one, too, has its positive aspects. There is still a single ray of light to be seen in all this darkness. And that is that editorials, reports and readers' letters published in the national press testify to the deep sense of shock felt by the majority of Hindus at this dastardly incident. The use of such phrases as 'a dark day,' 'a black day,' 'a day of shame' indicate the degree to which Hindus are in sympathy with Muslims over this issue.

This reaction on the part of Hindus to this recent act of extremism bears out the Qur'anic statement that, 'verily, with every difficulty there is relief' (94:6). That is, in every adverse situation, there is a favourable element which lies hidden. One of the greatest and best-known illustrations of this aphorism is the story the Qur'an tells of Adam's two sons, Abel and Cain (Habil and Qabil). The conflict between them became so desperate that ultimately Cain decided to kill his younger brother, Abel. Abel once full of life, now lay motionless before him – a lifeless corpse. Now as Cain looked upon the blood-spattered

body of this brother whom he had thought of only as a rival, his conscience began to awaken. The humanity of his innermost being began to condemn the crime he had committed. 'Then he became full of regrets.' (Qur'an, 5:31)

This illustrates an important psychological reality: when revenge crosses all limits, it transforms itself into regret; when anger is given full play: it ultimately turns to acknowledgment; after showing its most cruel face, animality reverts to humanity.

This law of nature, eternal and immutable, serves to maintain the moral equilibrium of social existence. As such, it repeatedly brings misguided individuals back from the brink of rabid extremism to the calmness and sanity of moderation. In so doing, it brings order out of chaos.

It is this human capacity for regret which guarantees that an extremist movement in any given society will get under way only once, for the moment it perpetrates the unthinkable, it must retreat in anguish from that position; it is that anguish which makes the resurgence of extremism – an impossibility. It was in this very way that anti-Muslim fires were doused by Gandhiji's blood. And that is also why neither fascism in Italy, nor Nazism in Germany, could ever reappear after the Second World War.

The physical collapse of the Babri Masjid has become symbolic of the moral collapse of Hindu extremism. God willing, a new consciousness will be awakened in the country in the wake of this callous demolition. Let us hope that at least for the next few generations, there will be no repetition of such an ugly incident.

So far as the Muslims are concerned, their best course would be to close their eyes firmly to the past and to fix their gaze resolutely upon the future. They must forever bear in mind that the world has been made by its Creator in such a way that positive possibilities are always in excess of human dilemmas. No instance of oppression, however heinous, has the power to obliterate all conceivable solutions to what are essentially human problems. It should never be felt that every last ray of hope has been extinguished. Muslims must therefore, seize every possible opportunity for constructiveness and consolidation, and must strive particularly to make progress in the fields of education, commerce and industry.

From the point of view of internal construction, much needs to be done not only for Muslims but by Muslims. They themselves must endeavour to bring a much-needed religious and moral awakening. In so doing they will give a fresh impetus to their religious and national institutions. But this can happen only if there is unity in their ranks. There are many constructive tasks of this nature which have yet to be performed. But the need of the hour is for Muslims to put the memory of all distasteful events behind them and to throw themselves wholeheartedly into personal and societal advancement.

A Tyrant's Change of Heart

In the fourteenth century A.D. the Mongol tribe overran the Muslim empire, totally subverting Muslim rule and civilization in Iraq, Iran and Turkistan. Later, however, God mellowed their hearts, and the vast majority of them accepted Islam, thus becoming custodians of the Muslim faith.

The effect of missionary activity in those times can be judged from the story of Sheikh Jamaluddin. One day he was on his way somewhere, and happened to pass by the place where the Mongol prince, Tughlaq Timur, was out hunting. The latter was heir to the Chughtai branch of the Mongols, which was ruling over Iran at that time. The Mongols, in those times considered Iranians unlucky, and since the prince's soldiers took the presence of an Iranian in their hunting ground as an evil omen, they arrested him and brought him before the prince. On seeing him the prince became furious. "A dog is better than one of you Iranians," he shouted in anger. Sheikh Jamaluddin answered this abuse calmly. "If we had not found true religion then we would certainly have been worse than dogs," he said.

Though the Mongols were a barbaric tribe they were not in-human by nature. They were a sincere people. For this reason Tughlaq Timur was profoundly shaken by the Iranian's reply. He gave order for the Sheikh to be brought to him when he had finished hunting. When Sheikh Jamluddin was brought before him, he took him aside and asked him what that religion was that he had found. Fearlessly the Sheikh explained to him all the teaching of Islam. This conversation brought about a change of heart in the prince. He realized the danger of dying in a state of infidelity, and expressed his willingness to accept Islam. But he was still a prince, not yet a king. "If I accept Islam now", he said, "I will not be able to bring my subjects into the Islamic fold." Then he addressed Sheikh Jamaluddin saying, "Go for the present. When you hear that I have been crowned king, come and see me."

Sheikh Jamaluddin returned home and waited for the news of Tughlaq Timur's coronation; but it was not to come during his lifetime. Lying on his death-bed, he called his son Sheikh Rashiduddin and told him the whole story about the Mongol prince. Then he said to him, "I have been waiting for an auspicious moment, but now it seems that it will not come during my lifetime, so my last wish is that when the news of Tughlaq Timur's coronation reaches you, you should go to him, convey my regards and remind him boldly of our encounter when he was out hunting. Perhaps God will open his heart to Islam."

When Sheikh Jamaluddin died, his son eagerly awaited the coronation of the Mongol price. Before long the much awaited news of his coronation arrived. Immediately he set off. When he reached destination the gatemen would not allow him inside the king's tent, because he was unable to give them his reasons for wanting to see the king. So he decided to set up his camp under a tree near the king's tent.

One day he got up for the morning prayer. In the stillness of the early morning he made the call to prayer in a loud voice. The sound of his voice penetrated the tent where Tughlaq Timur was asleep. The king was offended at what seemed to him to be a meaningless noise at such an early hour. He told his servants to arrest the madman who was making it, and bring him to his tent. So the Sheikh was brought before the king.

Tughlaq Timur started asking him why he was making a noise next to his tent. The Sheikh recounted the whole story of his father's meeting him. "When my father said to you that if we had not found the truth, we would truly be worse than dogs, you said that at that time you could not commit yourself and told him to come and see you when you had been crowned king. My father was awaiting this day till he breathed his last. In accordance with his dying wish, I have come to you to remind you of the incident."

The king gave an attentive hearing to the whole story. "I remember my promise," he said finally. "I have been awaiting your arrival." Then he summoned his minister and told him that he had been keeping something to himself, of which an Iranian derish had reminded him that day. "I intend to accept Islam," he said. "What is your opinion?" he asked.

"I have also been keeping the same secret to myself." The minister answered. "I have realized that Islam is the true faith."

Then both the king and Vizir accepted Islam from the hands of Sheikh Rashiduddin. The rest of the courtiers did likewise. On the day of the king's conversion no less than 160,000 people entered the fold of Islam, and all of the Mongols living in Iran eventually followed suit.

The message revealed to the Prophet

Abu Nujaih Amr ibn Absah recounts how, even in the pre-Islamic period, he felt that the idolatrous religion practised in Arabia was misguided and far from the True Path. "Then I heard of the appearance in Mecca of a man who uttered inspired words. I mounted my camel and traveled to Mecca, where I found the Prophet quietly giving his message to the people, while they, for their part, went to extremes in taking liberties with him. I asked him who he was. 'I am God's Prophet,' he replied. When I asked him what a Prophet was, he said, 'One sent by God,' 'for what reason?' I asked, and the Prophet replied. He has sent me to unite kinspeople, to break idols and to make people regard God as One, and without any partners.'"

(Muslim, *Sahih*)

A Warning of What is to Come

In February 1983, forest fires devasted the hills of two states of Australia, South Australia and Victoria, leaving at least 71 people dead and 8000 homeless. The damage caused was estimated at 400 pound million.

Detective-Chief Inspector Bob Potts was one of the many volunteers who helped in the rescue work. For a day and a night he fought the fire in temperatures of 108 degrees and winds of 40 knots. This is how Bob Potts described his impressions: "We are full of stories but what I will recall is the sense of inadequacy. It was man versus nature and although it may sound dramatic, no amount of resources would have helped. Nature overwhelmed us."

Some of the homeless, however, saw the matter less dispassionately. Lyn Lamshed, whose house was burnt down, had this to say: "I do cry and I do feel angry, but most of the time I just feel empty. We never thought this would happen. This is a low-risk fire area."

These two constraints reactions are typical of the different concepts concerning the disasters which afflict man in this world. The first attitude is that which has been taught by the Prophets, and the second that of the philosophers. The Prophets taught that worldly catastrophes like earthquakes, forest fires, droughts, and hurricanes, are a sign of God; they are nature's warning of the more immense catastrophe which is going to overtake us in the Hereafter. When such calamities strike in this world, man is helpless before the might of nature. How much more helpless he will be before God when He appears in all His might and glory in the next world. On that day the curtain that obscures our vision of realities will be drawn back and they will be plain to see. In this world a crack sometimes opens in the curtain and we are given a glimpse of the realities which will be fully visible in the hereafter. This happens so that man may take heed and prepare for that day before it is upon us.

This is the attitude that the Prophets have taught man to have towards natural disasters. One should look at them as a sign of God – a warning – and take heed. But philosophers look at these events from another angle; they do not see them in their overall context: they look at them as tragic event in man's life and give them the heading "Problem of Evil.'

The calamities which afflict man in this world are a reminder of his helplessness. They make him mentally capable of discovering the true nature of things and becoming worthy of God's blessings. In the next, everlasting world, man will be truly free and independent. He will be absolutely immune from all forms of pain and anguish. But this rank will not be awarded to men by right; it will be a reward for their actions. Whoever consciously submits to God is worthy to be blessed with freedom; whoever is content to be powerless proves that he is deserving to be invested with power in the perfect and everlasting world of God.

When the whistle blows passengers know that the train is about to move out of the station. They treat it as a signal – a warning – that if they do not take their seats immediately the train will leave without them. When they look at it this way, they see the whistle as something proper. If they were to look at it as noise pollution, however, then they would not see it in its true light. They would not be able to take heed of the warning that it gives them. They would just see it as an evil. So it is with the calamities that strike man in this world. They can be seen in their true context and treated as a warning, or they can be looked at as just inexplicable manifestations of evil.

Revival of Past Glory

Muhammad Ali (1878-1931) was a famous Indian Muslim leader. He once had an encounter with a Delhiite painter, who had prepared a painting which he showed to Muhammad Ali in the hope that the leader would buy it. The painting depicted the great Jama Masjid of Delhi, built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan. The mosque is situated on a high foundation. There are flights of stairs leading up to it, on which beggars are a common sight. In this painting a beggar-woman was shown standing on the steps of the mosque holding a child in her arms.

Muhammad Ali looked at the painting and said, "I will buy it on one condition; that at the bottom you write the words, 'Her fathers built it'."

This incident shows what has motivated modern Muslim leaders. More than anything they were longing for their lost glory; all their efforts were directed towards regaining it. They gave their movements the name Islamic revivalism, but in fact they were only seeking to revive the past glory of Muslims.

This thinking of Muslim leaders in the present century has prevented them from accomplishing any far-reaching, constructive work. Take, for instance, the case of Delhi. At least one hundred large mosques – deserted or, at least, neglected – existed in the city. In most cases, sizeable plots of land were attached to these mosques. If they had made these their centres, Muslim leaders could have engaged in constructive efforts at spreading their faith. But instead their sacrifices were wasted in trying to bring back the political power Muslims had lost. All the opportunities for constructive work which were available, went unavailed.

When politically-minded Muslims look at the Great Mosque and Red Fort of Delhi, they are reminded only of their past glory. Muslims who are endowed with missionary spirit, on the other hand, look at such monuments and are filled with a desire to use such places as centres for the missionary work which has been neglected up to now.

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The Pharaoh of Moses

"But We will this day deliver you with your body so that you may be a sign to those after you. And most surely the majority of the people are heedless to Our communications" (10:92).

This passage from the Qur'an has reference to the death of Pharaoh near the Red Sea, while in pursuit of Moses and the Israelites, and states that his body was not lost in the sea, but cast ashore and afterwards embalmed and that this should, in due course, be made known to generations to come.

The Bible makes no mention of it, nor do we find anything about it in any book of history. Recently, however, among the mummies in Egypt the body of Ramses II, who has been identified with the Pharaoh of Moses, has been discovered.

Those who seek among modern data for proof of the veracity of the Holy Scriptures will find a magnificent illustration of the above verses of the Qur'an dealing with the Pharaoh's body by visiting the Royal Mummies Room of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

Intellectual Revolution

Islamic revival is basically revival of Islamic thought. In every age there is a predominant pattern of thought according to which people's intellectual framework is formed and according to which communities and nations organize their lives. In ancient times polytheistic thought was predominant. . Then, in the 7th century, the Islamic revolution changed the course of human history. Monotheism came to dominate world thought.

This situation continued for approximately one thousand years. Then things began to change, until another revolution occurred in the modern age. The emergence of new learning in recent centuries has completely changed the human mind. In every branch of learning new standards have been established. In this way, over the last few centuries, human thought has undergone a radical alteration, and is now based on heresy or, at least, secularism; that is, in all matters human intellect is paramount and life is organized on unrevealed foundations.

Under such conditions Islamic revival means once again ushering in a new age for man. Just as our predecessors ended polytheism's intellectual dominance and established monotheism in its place, so the task which lies before us is to put an end to thoughts of a heterodox and secular nature and re-establish the dominance of God-oriented thought in its place.

The Islamic Center seeks to bring about an intellectual revolution of this nature. Without doubt, this is a very difficult task. In fact, there is no task more difficult. But we are taking up this task trusting in God rather than in ourselves. And, as the Prophet Jesus said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew, 19:26)

Tight Rope Walking

One feat that acrobats perform is tight-rope walking. What a perilous journey it is, with the acrobat always in danger of tilting to the right or left and falling to the ground. For this reason the tight rope walker holds a long bamboo cane in his hands. If his body tilts rightwards, he holds the cane to his left; if his body tilts leftwards, he holds the cane to his right. In this manner he keeps his balance and walks along the rope.

This is the method that those who are propagating the message of Islam should adopt in the present day and age. The Muslim world is at present spilt up into two blocks, some nations belong to one political camp and some to another. This grouping has affected Islamic movements and Organizations. They have also joined one camp or the other and support one camp and oppose the other.

This situation is an obstacle to communication of the message of Islam. Islamic movements require the assistance of these Muslim countries. But the price that is being paid for this assistance is that every movement becomes the tool of one political camp or another, doing irreparable damage to the Islamic cause.

Under these conditions, those who preach the message of Islam should adopt the technique of a tight rope walker. Keeping a balance in their relations with both camps, they should continue their constructive work.

Taking the side of one camp against another is certain to involve the preacher in irrelevant issues: The only way to avoid unrelated issues, and engage wholly in missionary work, is to follow the technique of the tight rope walker.

A Happy Ending to the Tragedy of Life

The capital of British India was initially Calcutta. In 1911, King George V announced the transfer of the capital to Delhi. The British architect, Sir Edwin Luytens (1864-1944) was commissioned to design the new capital. Construction work commenced in 1913, and eventually the magnificent city of New Delhi came into existence.

This was a time when the whole world was being swept by a new political wave: nationalism. Progressive trends in political thought had rendered the colonial system of government untenable. The freedom movement in India was fast gaining momentum. It was apparent that British rule in India would not survive for long. The completion of New Delhi thus coincided with the decline of the British Raj.

After the construction of New Delhi, a French political leader visited India. When he saw the glittering palaces and spacious mansions of the new capital of British India, he expressed his reaction in the following words: "What a magnificent world they built to leave."

This is not only true of the British in India: it is true of all of us in this world. We come into this world full of desires and aspirations. We exert all our efforts on constructing a "magnificent world" for ourselves on earth. Then, just as our dream world begins to take shape, the angel of death visits us and takes us away from the world we have worked hard to construct for ourselves. We are then taken to what Arthur Koestler called an "unknown country."

Life is a tragic story indeed if that is all there is to it. But this world, like everything else in the universe, can only be complete with its counterpart. The counterpart of this world is the hereafter. For those who have forgotten the next world, this life is certainly just a tragedy; but for those who look forward to the life to come, and build for the hereafter in the present life, this world will become an invaluable step towards a new, more successful existence in the next world.

Life is a tragedy when seen without the hereafter. This tragedy can only be given a happy ending with addition of the life to come.

Careful, Someone May be Listening

There was an astonishing headline in the *Times of India* of December 19, 1982. It ran: Careful, Uncle Sam may be listening.

The story behind this headline is that over one million telephone calls and telexes are made from the United States every day. These communications are first picked up at an earth station in Virginia. They are then relayed through a satellite orbiting 2300 miles above the earth. All this happens in less than a second.

This means that every message which is electrically transmitted from the United States reaches the U.S. government before it reaches the intended person. If a secret-service officer wants to know anyone's message, all he has to do is give the person's phone number to the earth station. The communication is then intercepted and automatically recorded.

A person who realizes that the government is listening to his conversation will be very careful what he says. In the same way anyone who is aware of the fact that God hears his every word will be cautious in his speech. When one addresses someone in an inconsiderate manner, one thinks that one is just addressing a human-being, but in fact what one says reaches God first. We should be careful in our speech, for God hears everything we say.

A Living Example

On 15th August 1969, India's Independence Day was being celebrated in the Moghul Gardens of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the official residence of the President of India. Muhammad Hidayatullah was, at that time, acting President of the country. In his book of memoirs *My Own Boswell*, (pp. 245-246), he recalls the impressiveness of the occasion, with the escort of the Military Secretaries, aid-de-camps and the President's Body Guard, all in their splendid uniforms. "We made glittering sight," he writes, and he admits that, "I felt a little pride." .

But then immediately he was reminded of the entry of Caliph Omar into Syria. When Islamic forces had conquered Syria and Palestine, the Romans offered the surrender of the city of Damascus if the Caliph came to receive it in person. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab the second successor of the Prophet Muhammad, set off from Madinah with one camel and one servant. Near Damascus, at Jabiya, he was met by his generals Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah and Khalid ibn al-Walid. He stayed there for a few days, and after discussion with the Romans, terms were agreed upon.

After completion of the agreement with the Romans, Omer set off for Jerusalem. He was wearing rough, simple clothes and riding on a lean camel. People presented him with brand new clothes and insisted that he should forsake his camel for a fine horse of Turkish pedigree. The horse moved off majestically, but 'Umar alighted after traveling a few yards, and asked for his camel back. "Pride is entering my soul," he said, "and the Prophet said that if a man has pride the size of a mustard seed, he will not enter paradise."

When Muhammad Hidayatullah remembered this incident, his attitude changed. The pride which he had felt immediately deserted him. He describes his feelings in these words:

"I felt ashamed of myself and put aside the feeling at once and began thinking of other things."

Islam teaches one never to be proud, and to live among one's fellow men in a humble manner, even if one attains some high worldly position. Islam has not only taught this simply as an attractive theory: it has also provided a flawless example of it in history. Thus Islamic teachings can always be seen to be practical; they are not just fine words.

Because of One Vowel

This is how Professor A.J. Arberry has translated Verse 39 of the chapter of the Qur'an entitled "Pilgrimage":

Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged – surely God is able to help them.

It can be seen that he has rendered the verb "to fight" into the active voice, whereas in the original Arabic it is in the passive voice. There is a difference of one vowel between the active and passive forms of this verb. N.J. Dawood has correctly translated the verse as follows:

Permission to take up arms is hereby given to those who are attacked, because they have been wronged: Allah has power to grant them victory.

This translation shows that the Prophet and his companions only fought when they were attacked, whereas Professor Arberry's translation gives one the impression that Muslims took up arms themselves, without provocation from the other side.

Religion and Scientific Reasoning

Many people are under the impression that religious truths cannot be proved scientifically. But inferring truths from things, as religion does, is the very reasoning which scientists employ in their everyday deductions.

In ancient times water was just water. Then, in the 19th century, the microscope was invented. When water was looked at under a microscope, it was discovered that water was not just water; it also contained countless live bacteria. In the same way man used to think that there were no more stars in the sky than those which can be seen with the naked eye. But in modern times the sky has been examined with telescopes and many more stars than can be seen with the naked eye have been discovered.

These two examples show the difference between ancient and modern times. Modern research has shown with certainty that there are many more realities than man had previously thought when he was limited to the sphere of simple observation. But these new discoveries so excited those who were making them that they made another claim: that reality is that which can be directly observed; that which we can not experience or observe is mere hypothesis, and does not exist.

In the nineteenth century this claim was made with great enthusiasm. It was most damaging to religion. Religious creeds are based on belief in the unseen; they cannot be directly observed or experienced. For this reason many people came to think of religion as hypothetical and unreal.

Twentieth century research has completely changed this state of affairs. Advanced study has shown that there is more to life than meets the eye: all the great realities of life lie beyond our comprehension.

According to Bertrand Russell there are two forms of knowledge; knowledge of things and knowledge of truths. Only "things" can be directly observed: "truths" can only be understood by indirect observation, or, in other words, inference. The existence of light, gravity, magnetism and nuclear energy in the universe is an undisputed fact, but man cannot directly observe these things. He knows them only by their effects. Man discovers certain "things" from which he infers the existence of "truths."

This change in the concept of knowledge which occurred in the twentieth century changed the whole situation radically. Man was forced to accept the existence of things which he could not directly see, but only indirectly experience. With this intellectual revolution the difference between seen and unseen reality disappeared. Invisible objects became as important as visible objects. Man was compelled to accept that indirect, or inferential argument, was academically as sound as direct argument.

This change in the concept of knowledge has, in the present age, made divine reasoning truly scientific.

For instance, the greatest argument for religion is what philosopher call the argument from design. Nineteenth century scholars, in their zeal, did not accept this reasoning. To them it was an inferential argument which could not be accepted academically. But in the present age this objection has been invalidated. Nowadays man is compelled to infer the existence of a designer of the universe from the existence of a design in the universe, just as he accepts the theory of the flow of electrons from the movement of a wheel.

A statement of Bertrand Russell throws some light on this matter. In the preface to his book *Why I am Not a Christian* he writes:

"I think all the great religions of the world - Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Communism – both untrue and harmful. It is evident as a matter of logic that, since they disagree, not more than one of them can be true. With very few exceptions, the religion which a man accepts is that of the community in which he lives, which makes it obvious that the influence of environment is what has led him to accept the religion in question. It is true that scholastics invented what professed to be logical arguments proving the existence of God, and that these arguments, or others of a similar tenor, have been accepted by many eminent philosophers, but the logic to which these traditional argument appealed is of an antiquated Aristotelian sort which is now rejected by practically all logicians except such as are Catholics. There is one argument that is not purely logical. I mean the argument from design. This argument, however, was destroyed by Darwin; and, in any case, could only be made logically acceptable at the cost of abandoning God's omnipotence."

Arguing the existence of a designer from design is, as Russell admits, a scientific argument in itself. It is the very argument which science uses to prove anything. Russell then rejects this argument by citing Darwin's theory of evolution. This rejection would only be acceptable if Darwin's theory was itself scientifically established. But scientific research has proved Darwinism to be mere hypothesis, rather than established scientific fact. It is Russell's first statement, therefore, concerning the validity of the argument from design that must prevail. His rejection of that argument on the basis of Darwinism is groundless.

Left Speechless

On February 20, 1980, the *Hindustan Times* reported an incident that occurred in New Delhi. A three-wheeler scooter rickshaw driver had left his vehicle in a no-parking spot. A traffic inspector warned him on the loudspeaker to remove his vehicle immediately. He heard the warning but, seeing no traffic-police in the vicinity, paid no heed; he had no knowledge of the close-circuit television system, which had only recently been installed. The warning was coming through to him loud and clear, but he ignored it. All this time, the traffic inspector could see what the driver was doing. When he saw that his warning was being ignored, he sent a policeman to apprehend the errant driver. But the driver refused to admit his offence. He denied having parked in a prohibited spot. "I only stopped for a minute to drop a passenger," he protested. "I am just moving on."

There is a new system of traffic control in many cities of the world, a closed-circuit television system much the same as can be seen in most departmental stores of Europe and America. Television cameras are placed at vantage points on roads. The film is relayed to a control room where, far from people's vision, a traffic inspector surveys the whole scene on a video screen. According to his observations, he directs the movement of traffic through a loudspeaker system. The traffic inspector, sitting in the control room where he cannot be seen, thus sees what is going on the roads, and also admonishes anyone whom he sees breaking any rule. The drivers who are being addressed over the loudspeaker can hear a voice, but cannot see anyone.

The policeman took him before the inspector in the control room. The driver told the inspector the same story that he had told the policeman. When the inspector saw that the driver was not ready to admit his offence, he played back the whole video recording showing the driver's movements. The driver saw himself approaching in his scooter; he saw himself parking in a no-parking spot; he saw himself chatting with some friends; he saw the policeman approaching; then he saw himself starting the scooter, pretending that he had only parked there for a minute and was on the move. The driver saw the whole sequence of events played back to him before his very eyes. Up to now the driver had denied the inspector's allegations. He had plenty of words with which to justify himself. But when his actions were replayed to him on the video, he was stunned into silence. His offence had been proved so conclusively that there was no point in him even admitting it. His silence was sufficient proof of his guilt. In the words of the *Hindustan Times* reporter, he was "left speechless."

Just as the driver was left speechless on seeing a video recording of his movements, so all men will be left speechless when a recording of their actions on earth is played back to them in the life hereafter. In this world people do not accept reality. They are called to justice, but they do not heed the call. This situation, however, will not last.

Science has shown that man's words and deeds are imprinted in the cosmos. Such is God's universal recording system. God has arranged for everything man does to be recorded under the order of the cosmos. In the next life, when God brings justice to the world, He will replay this recording. Everyone will see, on a cosmic screen, what he really was and what he was pretending to be; he will see how he was used to oppressing and exploiting others; he will hear the words he used to speak in pretence that he was doing right and was wronging no one.

Man denies truth in this world. He pretends to be in the right. In the next world, however, God will play him a full record of his actions. He will find himself in the same situation as the scooter driver was when he was left speechless.